

AGATM Northern Virginia Chapter NEWSLETTER

SUMMER '26 | PY-26-27-1

Meet and Greet the New President: Kelsey Do

Editor: Tell us a little bit about yourself and your career.

Kelsey: My career has been full of twists I never saw coming. I started out in public sector consulting, then went back to school to study business and information systems. I left

grad school at the height of the pandemic and ended up at another consulting firm supporting the Small Business Administration (SBA). SBA is where I was first exposed to financial management and federal credit programs, work that eventually pushed me into a government role as Senior Advisor to SBA's CFO. In 2025, I left federal service to co-found KADO Executive Operations. KADO helps small businesses grow through a better understanding of their financial operations. I'm a proud Virginia Tech graduate (Go Hokies!), grew up in the Northeast, and landed in the DMV after college. Outside of work, I'm an introvert who recharges through yoga, a good book, and chasing around my two young daughters.

Editor: What was one of your first jobs and how did it shape your career?

Kelsey: My first job out of college was at IBM as a public sector consultant, and I loved it. I loved being at a large company with a lot of opportunity to move around. That job is also where I first got exposed to AI and understood how important it is to actually grasp the foundations of technology, not just use it. I was so intrigued by the work I was doing there that after five years I left IBM to go study information systems, which is a decision that's shaped everything I've done since.

Editor: How did you get involved with the AGA and NOVAGA chapter?

Kelsey: Honestly, I'd barely heard of AGA before 2023, when I joined the SBA. I'm not an accountant or an auditor by background, so I was brand new to both financial management and the federal space at the same time. A few persistent AGA volunteers pulled me in and talked me into volunteering, and the rest is history. I'm still learning something new about the organization (and meeting

Continued on Next Page ➔

CHAPTER INFORMATION

- ★ Past President's Message - **3**
- ★ Upcoming Chapter Events - **5**
- ★ Member Spotlight - **8**

MEMBERSHIP UPDATES

- ★ New Chapter Members- **9**
- ★ Update Your Email- **9**
- ★ Anniversaries- **10**

OTHER CHAPTER NEWS

- ★ Past Chapter Events - **12**
- ★ Early Careers - **15**
- ★ SLG Updates - **15**
- ★ Thought Leadership- **16**
- ★ Board Members - **22**
- ★ Corporate Sponsors - **23**
- ★ Contact Us - **23**

someone new) at every event!

Editor: What's been the best aspect with AGA with respect to your career development? Are there any membership benefits you have particularly enjoyed?

Kelsey: The networking! AGA has given me a place to meet people outside my usual circles, learn how other organizations are tackling the same challenges I'm facing, and build connections.

Editor: Why would you recommend AGA to someone with a career in government accountability?

Kelsey: Have you ever tried to explain what you do at the dinner table? AGA is a room full of people who get it, without you having to explain why it matters. It's also a career accelerator: the Certified Government Financial Manager (CGFM) training and certification options are excellent if you want to build credibility in this field, and the relationships people build here can have a direct influence on their next job.

Editor: Do you have any advice for professionals in government who are considering joining AGA or are not active members? How can AGA play a role in their career?

Kelsey: You don't need to be an expert in the industry to get involved in the community! I came in knowing almost nothing about accountability or the federal space, and the people I met here changed that fast. If a total newcomer like me can end up as chapter president two years later, you can find your place here too.

Editor: What is something most people do not know about you?

Kelsey: I was a ballet dancer from age 4 until I graduated high school - a former life that feels worlds away...but I think it's where I first learned the concept of discipline and how to perform under pressure.

Editor: What would you like to accomplish during your tenure as NOVAGA President this program year?

Kelsey: I'm excited about tightening up some of our internal processes so the chapter runs more smoothly for

the volunteers who make it all happen. But what I hope members actually notice is a few new member-focused events, a bigger push into community service, fresh speakers covering topics we haven't dug into before, and growing our membership so more people get to experience what pulled me in two years ago.

Editor: What are you looking forward to this year as NOVAGA President?

Kelsey: Getting to meet even more people across the chapter. Every event I've been to has introduced me to someone new, and I'm looking forward to a whole year of that, plus watching some of the new events and initiatives we're planning come to life.

Editor: Send a picture of you that is not work-or AGA-related.

Kelsey: A photo of my family at the beach, where we are always happiest (even though my kids don't look like it in this one!).

Kelsey Do will serve as the NOVAGA Chapter President effective July 1, 2026. Kelsey is the President and Co-Founder of KADO Executive Operations, where she helps mission-driven organizations scale through fractional finance and operations leadership. With a background in both government and the private sector, she brings a pragmatic approach to strategy, operations, and financial management. Kelsey previously served as Senior Advisor to the Chief Financial Officer at the U.S. Small Business Administration, where she led agency-wide initiatives to improve budget execution, risk management, and operational effectiveness. Prior to SBA, she held leadership roles at several professional services firms, supporting cross-functional teams on technology modernization efforts.

Kelsey holds an MBA and a Masters in Information Systems from Johns Hopkins University, and Bachelors degrees in Business Management and French from Virginia Tech. As a former yoga teacher and busy toddler mom, Kelsey brings clarity to complexity and is always seeking the calm amidst the noise.





PAST PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As we begin a new chapter for the Northern Virginia AGA Chapter, I want to extend my sincere congratulations to **Kelsey Do** as she steps into the role of Chapter President. It has been an honor and privilege to serve as your President, and I am excited to see our chapter continue to thrive under Kelsey's leadership. While my role is changing, my commitment to our chapter remains strong. I am honored to serve as your Past President and as our chapter's representative on the AGA National Council of Chapters, where I will continue advocating for our members and helping strengthen connections across the AGA community.

My Story

My passion for government financial management began immediately after college when I started my career in public service. In 2010, I earned my Certified Government Financial Manager (CGFM). The CGFM is AGA's premier professional certification and demonstrates competency in governmental accounting, auditing, financial reporting, internal controls, and budgeting at the federal, state, and local levels. After rejoining AGA in 2017, I quickly rediscovered the tremendous value of being part of this professional community. My involvement in AGA has increased my professional confidence, supported my career growth, and expanded my network and relationships across the government financial management profession. The knowledge I've gained, the connections I've built, and the

opportunities to serve have all played an important role in my professional journey. What makes the Northern Virginia Chapter especially unique is our location in one of the nation's largest hubs for government financial management professionals. Our chapter brings together federal, state, local, and private-sector professionals who are dedicated to strengthening government accountability, transparency, and stewardship. The depth of expertise and willingness of our members to share knowledge and support one another are what make our chapter such a valuable professional community.

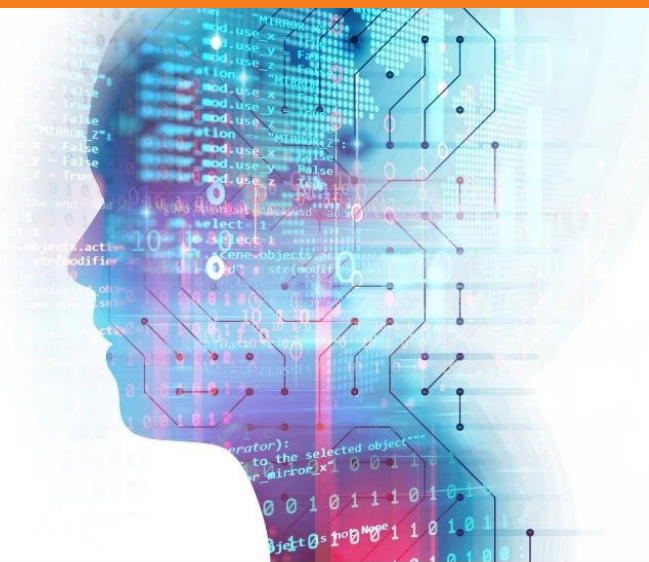
As we look ahead, our goal is simple: to grow and strengthen our community while delivering meaningful value to our members. We want AGA to be recognized as the premier place where government financial management professionals come to learn, connect, and lead. A key focus for this year will be growing our membership. The true power of our chapter comes from our members. Each new member brings fresh perspectives, experiences, and ideas that enrich our community and help us better serve the government financial management profession. Whether you're a longtime member or new to AGA, your engagement and participation are what make our chapter successful.

Thank you for your continued support, involvement, and commitment to AGA. I look forward to serving alongside Kelsey and our chapter leadership team as we continue building a vibrant and impactful professional community.

RMA | Associates

WHO AUDITS THE AI?

AI ADOPTION IS ACCELERATING.
ASSURANCE NEEDS TO KEEP PACE.



CAN YOUR AGENCY ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS?



GOVERNANCE

Who owns the AI system, approves its use, and accepts its risk?



DATA

Can you demonstrate the quality, provenance, protection, and appropriateness of data?



CONTROLS

Are oversight, access, change management, and exception controls working as intended?



PERFORMANCE

Is the AI producing reliable results within established tolerances?



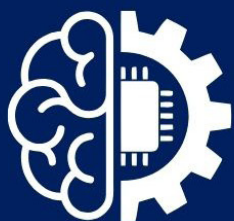
TRANSPARENCY

Can decisions, outputs, limitations, and dependencies be sufficiently evaluated?



MONITORING

Can you detect degradation, failures, emerging risks, and changes over time?



FROM AI GOVERNANCE TO AUDIT EVIDENCE

RMA's AI Assurance Methodology translates federal AI guidelines into practical audit objectives, criteria, evidence requirements and testing procedures.



Let's Talk about
AI Assurance

✉ info@rmafed.com

☎ (571) 429-6600



UPCOMING NOVAGA CHAPTER MEETINGS & EVENTS

NOVAGA has several chapter meetings scheduled for this program year, with great speakers. To our speakers, we thank you so much for giving us your time, energy, and providing us with insight into some great topics.

9/17

NOVAGA Chapter – State and Local Government Webinar (Virtual)

2–3pm | 1 CPE

The AGA Northern Virginia Chapter State and Local Government (SLG) Committee invites you to attend a virtual webinar on the Build America, Buy America Act (BABA) Act.

BABA has had a significant impact on federally funded infrastructure projects and was intended to support domestic manufacturing by increasing the use of American made products and materials. For grantees, BABA imposes specific requirements, which have caused challenges in complying with BABA. As a result, there have been issues with project viability, project delays, and increased costs related to materials and compliance.

The role of state and local governments is to understand the compliance requirements and learn best practices. This webinar will discuss BABA requirements, challenges in complying with BABA, and highlight best practices.

Registration: \$25/AGA Members; \$40/AGA Non-Members

REGISTER TODAY ↗

UPCOMING NOVAGA CHAPTER MEETINGS & EVENTS CONT'D

9/17

NOVAGA Chapter Meeting (In Person)

Washington Golf and Country Club | 6-9 pm | 1 CPE

In 1985, Doc Brown told Marty McFly, "Where we're going, we don't need roads." In 2026, the accountability community might say the same thing — except where we're going, we don't need checklists. The session is organized around the four COSO "Looking into the Future" themes now confronting internal auditors, chief risk officers, and financial managers worldwide: dealing with the proliferation of data, leveraging artificial intelligence and automation, managing the escalating cost of risk management, and building stronger, more resilient organizations.

Attendees will leave with a practical roadmap — not a history lesson. Because if four decades of A-123 evolution teach us anything, it is this: the organizations that earn the public's trust are not the ones that predict the future perfectly, but the ones whose governance is built to meet it.

Great Scott — let's get started.

Registration: \$25/AGA Members; \$50/AGA Non-Members

REGISTER TODAY ↗

9/26

AGA Multi-Chapter Annual Picnic

Barcroft Park, Arlington, VA | 11am-2 pm

Members of the AGA Northern Virginia and DMV Chapters, including Baltimore, Montgomery/Prince George's County Chapter, and Washington, DC, are invited to attend the annual Multi-Chapter Picnic! Join us for a day of connection to kick off the new program year with AGA members from across the DMV.

This event is a wonderful opportunity to reconnect with colleagues, catch up with friends from other chapters, or meet new members across the region. Members, friends, and families are welcome. The picnic is free, but space is limited to 100 attendees, so please register early.

Registration is required to attend.

REGISTER TODAY ↗



KADO

EXECUTIVE OPERATIONS

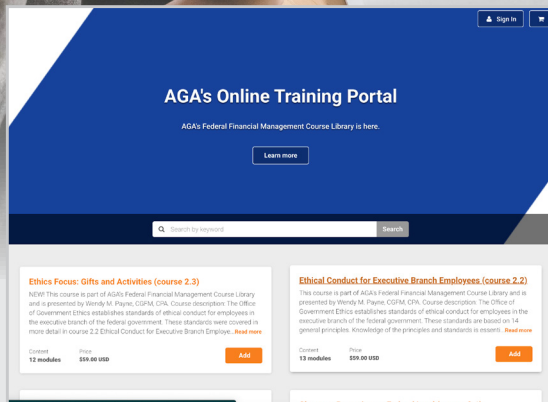
Finding Clarity in the Chaos

Financial strategy, operational discipline, and growthready infrastructure, built for nonprofits and public purpose organizations

Interested in how healthy your finance operations are compared to your peers?

[Chat with us.](#)

www.kadoexec.com



AGA ONLINE TRAINING PORTAL

Check out AGA's Online Training Portal page for its Federal Financial Management Course Library contents. AGA's Federal Financial Management Course Library was developed and presented by Wendy Payne, former Executive Director of Federal Accounting Standards Advisory Board, and provides online, on-demand courses. For a nominal charge, AGA members can purchase any of the five courses currently available online.

ACCESS THE TRAINING PORTAL

UPCOMING NOVAGA CHAPTER MEETINGS & EVENTS CONT'D

10/16

NOVAGA Junior Achievement Volunteer Event

Junior Achievement Finance Park Fairfax | 8:20am-1:25pm

We hope you can join us in making an impact! **On Friday, October 16th**, we will be providing volunteers to support middle school students at Junior Achievement Finance Park Fairfax.

Junior Achievement Finance Park® is Junior Achievement's experiential learning program for personal financial planning and career exploration. This program, comprising a curriculum and a simulation, helps students build a foundation on which they can make intelligent financial decisions that last a lifetime, including decisions related to income, expenses, savings, and credit.

The visit to Junior Achievement Finance Park is where students engage with volunteers and put into practice what they've learned by developing a personal budget. You don't need to be a financial literacy expert to be a great volunteer.

The Junior Achievement volunteer registration system will send you a confirmation email when you sign up with the details including timing, location, and what to bring. You will also receive a reminder email in advance of your volunteer day.

Please sign up as soon as possible so Junior Achievement knows how many volunteers to expect to ensure we have enough volunteers to support the students.

REGISTER AS A VOLUNTEER

11/10

NOVAGA State and Local Government Breakfast

Washington Golf & Country Club | 8:30-10am

Details to follow.



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT MARGARET SULLIVAN

Q1: Tell us a little bit about yourself and your career.

A: After graduating with a degree in history, French literature and African studies, and determining I was not cut out to be a teacher or researcher, a friend suggested I give accounting a go “because there is always a job for someone with an accounting degree”. She was right. Almost every job since then has been acquired thanks to that accounting degree – first in state government, then in federal contracting.

Q2: What was one of your first jobs and how did it shape your career?

A: My first audit job was with the Auditor of Public Accounts at the State of Nebraska. It was the perfect training ground – I was able to learn all parts of the audit and found that I enjoyed putting the puzzle pieces together and helping agencies to improve or correct their processes. What I learned at that job prepared me to succeed in every job since.

Q3: How did you learn about AGA and what made you get involved with the NOVAGA chapter?

A: One of my first managers, Timothy Channer, was very involved in the Lincoln chapter and encouraged me to join. Once I moved to the DMV, I was once again encouraged, this time by my boss Lani Eko, not just to join but to participate in the DC chapter. Membership with the NOVAGA chapter came when I realized we were allowed to join multiple chapters and that it was often easier for me to get to the NOVAGA events than the DC ones.

Q4: How do you anticipate AGA will contribute in your career development?

A: AGA has already actively contributed to my career via the CGFM accreditation which qualified me for projects I would not otherwise have been eligible to participate in. I anticipate it will continue to open doors. Beyond that, the professional development opportunities keep me up to date on current and emerging issues.

Q5: Are there any membership benefits you are looking forward to?

A: I always look forward to opportunities for CPE (especially related to government accounting/audit!) and the social events where I can be in a room full of people who understand what I do for a living.

Q6: Do you have any advice for professionals in government?

A: Having worked with a few hot-tempered individuals, what stands out to me most is this: the government world can be surprisingly small; don't say something in the heat of the moment and burn a bridge. It might come back to haunt you; especially when you're looking for your next project or job.

Q7: What is something most people do not know about you?

A: Once upon a time between audit jobs, I spent a few years working as a French interpreter. It was an education in learning to maintain a professional demeanor in all kinds of situations and navigating cultural differences.





NEW NORTHERN VIRGINIA CHAPTER MEMBERS

June 2026

Henry Smith, IV, Jennifer Apesos, Ambuj Chhetri, Jose Cruz, James Davis, Joshua Graves, Elyse Jacobs, Brenda Machuca, Karla Padilla, Leonard Pawlow, Joselito Rivera, Tatiana Saburova

July 2026

Ryan Blair, Tracy Burr, Wara Calvetty Umana, Selester Copeland, Shuying Dong, Fran Legall, Kyle McClain,

July 2026 cont'd

Jeremy Milliken, Edward Pabalan, Ashley Rae Remz, CARMEN RIVERA-CRUZ, Timothy Rothka

August 2026

Omololu Adeyemi, Alan Evans, Anderson Martin, Maeghan Stockli

UPDATE YOUR EMAIL

Each year, NOVAGA's Membership Committee plans the various chapter-level events that occur alongside the educational and award events, and the many happy hours, skiing, snowboarding, and other sporting events, and fundraisers. While the events were far fewer in 2020 and 2021 due to COVID restrictions and safety concerns, the Committee began hosting some in-person events in late 2021 and even more in 2022. 2023 and 2024 included more in-person and hybrid options with 2024 proving that more of us are choosing to attend in-person events.

In this upcoming year, our social, educational, and other events will continue to take place in-person and virtually whenever possible.

To make sure you receive all updates on future educational and social events from AGA and NOVAGA, check your profile and make sure your email is up to date! And don't forget to check your spam folder – you may need to add NOVAGA as a safe address to receive updates.

ATTENTION CHAPTER MEMBERS!



If you have any pictures taken at any NOVAGA events (virtual or in-person events) or have information that should be included in the newsletter, please email the Newsletter Editor (Nishit Kurani at N.kurani@rmafed.com).



ANNIVERSARIES – LIFETIME

Lifetime membership is bestowed upon individuals who have maintained active members status for at least 40 consecutive years, to recognize their distinguished service to AGA. This means that as of today, NOVAGA's lifetime members have been active since at least 1981; in fact, NOVAGA has 36 lifetime members, with two that have been active since joining in 1965— 61 years ago! Our lifetime members have a combined 1824 years of service! Lifetime membership is bestowed upon individuals who have maintained active members status for at least 40 consecutive years, to recognize their distinguished service to AGA. Lifetime memberships are awarded each January, with the next slate of lifetime members to be awarded in early 2027. In January 2026, our total lifetime members rose to 36. To all of our Lifetime Members, thank you for your continued support, and service to chapter, AGA. The NOVAGA Chapter recognizes congratulates chapter members on their milestone anniversaries from June 1, 2026 through August 31, 2026.

LIFETIME MEMBERS (40+ YEARS)

*Karl L. Boettcher
Joseph C. Brown, Jr.
Sheila B. Clark
Raymond D. Kidd
Philip D. Lavietes
Thomas F. McCarty
Edward J. Migliore
Michael Slachta, Jr.
George H. Stalcup
Jeffrey C. Steinhoff
James C. Stewart*

ANNIVERSARIES – CONTINUED

(30 YEARS)

*Diahann M. Arzu
Daniel K. Chandler*

(20 YEARS)

John D. Major

(15 YEARS)

*Jessica G. Boucher
Maria Christoforatos
Daniel E. King
Mohammad Kohistani
Scott Malzahn
Jeffrey Jon Olewinski
Jack Reeves
Mark J. Terman*

(10 YEARS)

*D.J. Allan
Taylor N. Larimore
Jung H. Walley
Marie N. Godwin
Sairah Ijaz*

(5 YEARS)

*Audry Haynes
Tyler C. Gall
Daega Fatah
Oluwatosin Toriola
Kelley E. Rockwell
Giovanni Leon
Jennifer L. Apesos*

(1 YEAR)

*Rosario A. Torres
Lihong Guo
Ezinwanne S. Ugbode
Stephanie A. Drake
Aidan D. Kardos
St John Leck
Kanokwan Pandaeng
Eva Jane Cardenas
Nicole Hall Bryan*

**AGA NOVAGA INSTAGRAM HANDLE!**

@AGANOVACHAPTER

Our AGA member Jaslin Madrigal Castro has created AGA NOVAGA Instagram Handle. Feel free to add, share and or contact Jaslin at jaslin.castro@sikich.com to send anything you would like to add to our Instagram.

**AGA NOVAGA LINKEDIN PAGE**

Check the Chapter's LinkedIn page for more information on chapter meeting events.



PAST EVENTS

AGA NOVA ANNUAL AWARDS GALA (JULY 11, 2026)

What a wonderful evening celebrating our 2026 award recipients! This year's Roaring Twenties theme was a tremendous success. Everyone looked fantastic and enjoyed connecting with fellow members. In addition to honoring our winners, we proudly introduced the inaugural Ann Ebberts Award for Elevating the Standards of Government Financial Management, created in recognition of her 12 years of dedicated service to AGA.

See next page for winners and event pictures.



PAST EVENTS CONT'D

NOVAGA GALA 2026

Thank you for joining us at the 2026 AGA NOVAGA on July 11, 2026 at the Washington Golf & Country Club. The Roaring '20s theme brought such energy to the evening. Everyone looked fantastic, and Washington Golf & Country Club proved to be a stunning venue with truly exceptional décor.

Congratulations to all of our award recipients. We are especially thrilled to introduce the Ann Ebberts Award to our Awards Showcase, a meaningful addition to our chapter's legacy. We're already looking forward to celebrating with you again next year. **This year's winners are:**



Chris Alvarez – Award recipient for the Jeffrey Steinhoff Award for Excellence in Federal Financial Management. Unfortunately, Chris was unable to join us. Presented by Ann Ebberts.

Ann Ebberts – Ann was surprised with her very own Inaugural Ann Ebberts Award for Leadership in honor of her 12 years of service with AGA, presented by Joe Hungate, RMA Associates, LLC.



Olivia Ranakusuma – Award recipient for the Pentagon Memorial Service Award. Olivia was also unable to join us. Irfan Satriadhi, KPMG LLC, presented and accepted the award in her absence.

Alexander Ries – Recipient of the Federal Financial Partnership Award. Presented by Joe Hungate.



Kevin Love – Recipient of the Presidential Award for Distinguished Service. Accepted by Juan Camacho and presented by Kelsey Do.

Rhett Raham – Recipient for the Presidential Award for Leadership Excellence. Presented by Irfan Satriadhi.



PAST EVENTS CONT'D

NOVAGA GALA 2026

Special recognition to the winner of the 2026 AGA National Volunteer of the Year Award, **Nishit Kurani**.



Thomas Luong – Recipient of the Presidential Award for Chapter Service. Presented by Kelsey Do.



Changing of the Guard – The NoVA Presidential Gavel was formally passed from Irfan Satriadhi to our new President, Kelsey Do. We extend our sincere appreciation to Irfan for his outstanding leadership and dedicated service. We look forward to a wonderful program year ahead under Kelsey's guidance.



Thank you to our wonderfully talented MC, Kyle McClain of ACE Business Development, who impressed us all with his exceptional hosting and a beautiful solo performance. Outstanding job, Kyle.

Special thank you to everyone who came out to celebrate with us. This year's event was such a great one. Can't wait until next year.

Here's the link to download your pictures from our fun evening. If you haven't downloaded them yet, feel free to do so using this link: [2026.AGANOVA.Gala.>](https://2026.AGANOVA.Gala.)





EARLY CAREER NOVAGA LIVE HAPPY HOUR

The Early Career Committee hosted a lively happy hour on Thursday, August 20, at Salt Line, bringing together 36 members and guests for an evening of networking and community building. The event welcomed several first-time attendees to the chapter, reflecting continued growth in engagement among early career professionals. We look forward to building on this momentum with future opportunities to connect, grow, and strengthen our AGA community.

Follow us on [LinkedIn](#) (AGA Northern Virginia Chapter (NOVAGA)) and [Instagram](#) (aganovachapter) to stay up to date for future events, including the Wine Tour and Bike & Brew!

If you have questions, want to lend a hand, or have ideas for future gatherings, please reach out to Rhett Raham (rhett.raham@yahoo.com) or Dylan Gilbert (dygilbert@deloitte.com).



STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE UPDATES

The State and Local Government (SLG) Committee has been busy this summer! We are pleased to welcome two new committee members: Rick Sproull of Focus Consulting and Fran Legall of Bazilio Cobb. We are excited to work with Rick and Fran to strengthen our outreach to state and local government financial managers.

The committee also put the finishing touches on planning for our Fall virtual training. Mark your calendars for the Second Annual Virginia Post-election Debrief on November 10. We will once again meet in person at the Washington Golf and Country Club to hear about the implications of the Virginia election results for state, regional, and local

governments in Northern Virginia. The committee is particularly pleased to welcome the participation of the Beta Alpha Psi (BAP) chapter of George Mason University. The BAP chapter provides career guidance and opportunities for accounting students, and the BAP chapter will help support the administrative needs of the Virginia Post-election Debrief, as well as attending the session and meeting AGA members. If you would like to meet and encourage the next generation of public sector financial managers, this event will be a great opportunity!

If you have any questions about the SLG committee or any of our events, please feel free to contact Chris Horton at chorton@mgocpa.com.

SMART OPS FOR GOVERNMENT: WHY YOUR AGENCY NEEDS A FINANCIAL CHECKUP

By Kelsey Do & Kate Aaby



Every government agency carries two blind spots: its own back office, and the performance of every organization it funds.



Most of us just lived through a year that made both blind spots bigger. Federal agencies shed staff and capacity. Contractors and private-sector partners absorbed work they weren't built to absorb. And state and local governments are picking up responsibilities that used to sit somewhere else. Everyone is doing more with less. That is exactly the condition under which small problems stop getting caught early.

The Mole Before It's Melanoma

Nobody skips the dermatologist because the mole doesn't hurt yet. You go precisely because it doesn't hurt yet, while a five-minute freeze-off is still on the table instead of six months of chemo.

Finance operations rarely get the same treatment. A slow grant-closeout process, a partner organization running on eleven days of cash instead of ninety, an internal approval workflow that grew from three signatures to seven — none of it hurts today. Left alone, "slow" becomes a missed federal deadline. "Thin cash cushion" becomes a program collapse a leader has to explain up the chain.

A Few Questions Worth Asking Before Someone Above You Does

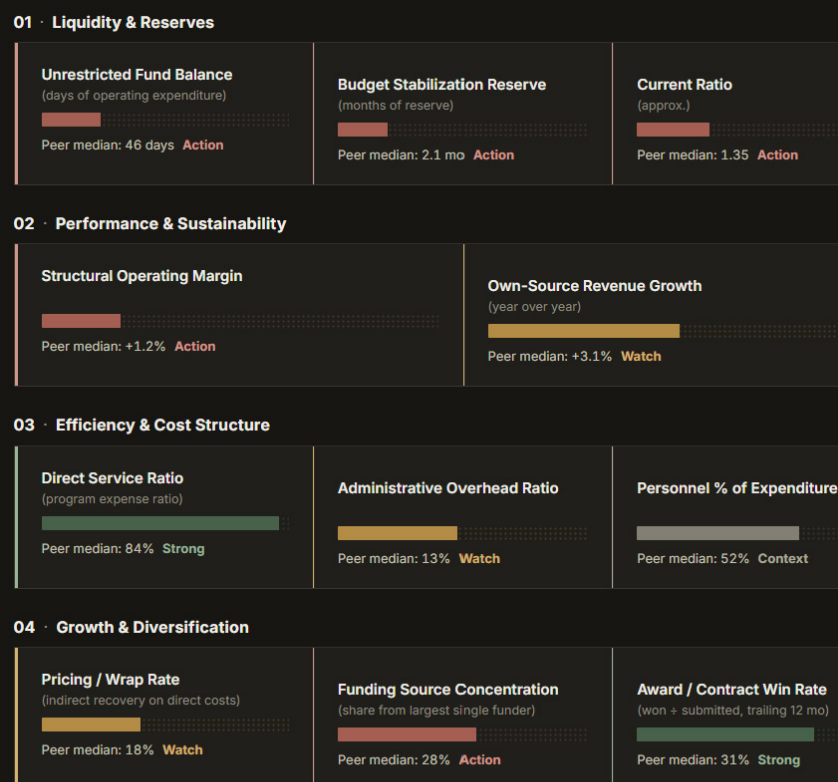
Do you know how many months your reserves would cover with zero new revenue? Could your finance function tell leadership today whether a new initiative is affordable, or does that take three weeks and a complicated spreadsheet? Has an internal approval process grown a few steps longer than it used to be, without anyone deciding that on purpose? If you fund or contract with outside partners, do you know which of them are running thin? If you can't answer those cleanly, it's not a crisis yet. It's a mole worth looking at now, while it's still just a mole.

What a Checkup Actually Looks Like

You don't need a task force for this, just a habit.

- Put it on the calendar. Pick a date and stick to it.
- Look at both your back office and your partners. Check both blind spots, every time.
- Keep it to one hour and four questions. Reserve runway, decision speed, approval creep, partner cash position.
- Write down what you find. This can be super informal: What did we check, what did we see, what are we watching.
- Compare your organization to your peers to benchmark how you're doing – consider automating processes that are time consuming or costly
- Escalate only if needed. Most quarters, the finding hopefully looks fine. Leadership should trust that silence means someone actually looked, not that no one asked.

Below is a sample of what this might look like in practice — a one-page snapshot benchmarking liquidity, performance, and cost structure against peer medians.



Illustrative sample. A live snapshot benchmarks against a real cohort of comparable state or regional agencies, sized and scoped to match, not a generic average.

Continued on Next Page ➔

What This Means for You

If you sit inside an agency, this is your opening to be the one who asks. Bring one of these questions to your leadership as a “let’s take a look” rather than waiting for it to surface as a finding in an audit or a budget hearing. A back office that can answer these questions is the kind of partner front-office leadership wants at the strategy table where the decisions get made.

If you’re in the private sector, especially serving government or nonprofit clients, you’ve probably already sensed this in a client relationship this year: a grant recipient that is slower to respond, a partner agency that’s quieter than usual about its numbers. That instinct is worth trusting. Flagging it gently as a trusted partner to your client may be the most useful thing you do for that relationship all year.

None of this requires a new office or a multi-year procurement. It requires treating an organization’s financial and operational position the way you’d treat your own health: something you check on a schedule, not something you wait to feel. Don’t let your organization — or your client’s — skip its checkup.

About the Authors

Kate is the CEO of KADO Executive Operations, which empowers non-profits and small businesses with fractional finance and operations executive leadership. As the former Chief Financial Officer for the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), she has a passion for economic development and increasing access to opportunity. Prior to SBA, Kate was the director of public sector financial services for a professional services firm managing large-scale operations and technology projects in both Washington D.C. and India. She also served in the White House Office of Management and Budget and New York City Human Resources Administration, where she learned how budgets are actually strategic policy and program execution tools disguised in a spreadsheet.

Kate holds a Masters of Public Administration from NYU, Bachelors in Political Science and Anthropology from UMD, Project Management Professionals (PMP) and Scrum Master certifications.

Kelsey is the President and Co-Founder of KADO Executive Operations, where she helps mission-driven organizations scale through fractional finance and operations leadership. With a background in both government and the private sector, she brings a pragmatic approach to strategy, operations, and financial management. Kelsey previously served as Senior Advisor to the Chief Financial Officer at the U.S. Small Business Administration, where she led agency-wide initiatives to improve budget execution, risk management, and operational effectiveness.

Kelsey holds an MBA and a Masters in Information Systems from Johns Hopkins University, and Bachelors degrees in Business Management and French from Virginia Tech.

About KADO Executive Operations

KADO Executive Operations is a proud sponsor of the AGA Northern Virginia Chapter. We’re honored to support the financial and operational backbone of mission-driven organizations across the region — taking what we learned running federal credit programs and putting it to work for the state and local governments and nonprofits now carrying more of that load.

This publication is for informational purposes only and does not constitute professional advice or services, or any endorsement of any kind.



THE AI PROTOTYPE TRAP: WHY FINANCIAL LEADERS SHOULD INVEST IN EVIDENCE, NOT JUST DEMOS

By Mark Pitts, Principal, Kearney & Company

A financial artificial intelligence (AI) prototype may generate a convincing executive dashboard before it can reconcile data, explain recommendations, or address auditor inquiries. This distinction is important. In Federal financial management, an effective demonstration may show that an AI application can summarize records, identify trends, or answer questions in plain language. However, it does not prove the solution can operate reliably within required controls, data standards, security policies, and accountability expectations.

AI-assisted development now enables rapid demonstrations of new capabilities. What once took months can now be shown in days. While this speed provides opportunities, it also creates risk: mistaking demonstration readiness for enterprise readiness.

Recent Government Accountability Office (GAO) findings reinforce this issue. In its April 2026 review of AI acquisitions at several Federal agencies, GAO found that agencies were not consistently collecting or applying lessons learned to prevent inherent risks related to sustained performance, accuracy, and cost. Without structured methods to capture these insights, agencies risk repeating avoidable mistakes as AI adoption grows.

The lesson is especially relevant for Federal Chief Financial Officer (CFO) organizations. Financial systems underpin budget formulation, reporting, audit readiness, internal controls, and public accountability. An AI-enabled capability may offer value before it is reliable enough to influence or automate financial decisions.

A prototype demonstrates feasibility. A production solution must also show it can perform reliably with authoritative data, operate securely at scale, deliver explainable results, and remain supportable as mission needs evolve.

The gap becomes clear when a demonstration faces real-life conditions. Data ingestion that works with sample files may fail or produce inconsistent results when connecting to multiple source systems. Outputs may seem accurate but lack data lineage to show how results were produced or which records support them. Controls sufficient for a demonstration

may not meet production requirements for identity management, audit logging, configuration controls, or data protection. An application that performs well for a small group may break down as data volumes increase, interfaces run on production schedules, and user numbers grow.

The principle is clear: a prototype should advance to pilot by proving usefulness, and a pilot should advance to production by proving control. Treating these as the same decision leads to rework, delays, and costly retrofits to data pipelines, security controls, integrations, and processes.

Before committing significant funding or scaling deployment, CFO leaders should apply four production entry tests:

- **Readiness Test:** Has the solution demonstrated enterprise-level performance, not simply technical feasibility? Agencies should require evidence that the capability can handle projected data volumes, concurrent users, service-level requirements, exception handling, and integration with key financial systems
- **Trust Test:** Can a reviewer trace outputs to supporting records, transformations, and approvals? A polished dashboard or natural-language response is insufficient. Financial leaders must know the data's origin, how it was validated and reconciled, what the model changed or inferred, and whether unexpected results can be investigated
- **Security and Control Test:** Has the solution been evaluated for its actual operating environment? Access controls, audit logging, configuration management, data retention, change control, and vendor or model dependencies are often overlooked in demonstrations but are key for protecting financial data, as well as maintaining confidence in results
- **Sustainability Test:** Is there an operating model for the capability after the pilot team disbands? Agencies should define ownership for model monitoring, data quality, integration maintenance, user support, updates, costs, and accountability for decisions made with AI outputs.

Continued on Next Page 

These tests do not discourage prototyping. Prototypes are essential for responsible modernization, allowing organizations to learn quickly, validate business value, and eliminate weak ideas before major investments. The mistake is not experimentation; rather, it is assuming a successful prototype has addressed the operational, governance, and lifecycle challenges of production.

Federal financial leaders should focus not on acquiring the most impressive demonstration, but on investing in AI capabilities that improve decision-making and strengthen stewardship and accountability. The most critical risks rarely appear during demonstrations. They emerge later, after contracts are awarded, real data is introduced, and the organization must convert a prototype into a dependable financial capability.

About the Author:

Mark is a technology leader with more than 30 years of experience spanning computer engineering, data and AI, statistics, and finance. Prior to joining Kearney, he served at MITRE as Chief Data Official and Director of Data Engineering and AI, where he led initiatives in data governance, AI implementation, and technical

strategy. Mark holds a Master of Science in Statistics from Texas A&M University and a Master of Accounting from the University of Florida. He is currently completing a Master of Engineering in Computer Engineering at Dartmouth College, with a focus on AI and autonomous systems. In his role at Kearney, Mark helps clients navigate the practical, governance, and operational considerations of adopting AI and other emerging technologies.

About Kearney & Company

Established in 1985, Kearney & Company is a Certified Public Accounting firm specializing in providing audit, consulting, and technology services to Government. Narrowing our market focus allows us to deepen our understanding of Government agencies and provide industry-leading insight to our clients. Kearney's staff — operating from our Alexandria, Virginia, headquarters and satellite offices across the United States — have provided services to every Cabinet-level department and most other agencies and commissions. The support we provide helps make the Government work better.

This publication is for informational purposes only and does not constitute professional advice or services, or any endorsement of any kind.



KEARNEY & COMPANY
www.kearneyco.com

WHERE GOVERNMENT ISN'T A SIDE BUSINESS — IT *IS* OUR BUSINESS.

Don't confuse size with focus. While other firms serve a multitude of industries, Kearney & Company has spent 25 years mastering one: government. With 1,300+ professionals, we bring the scale, rigor, and solutions expected of the largest firms to government missions. As **one of the top five CPA firms providing financial, technology, and other mission-support services to government**, we've served every Cabinet-level department with the dedication and expertise that only comes from a focused commitment.

Equally capable. Uniquely focused.

THE AI ACCOUNTABILITY GAP: WHAT GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL MANAGERS NEED TO KNOW

By Timothy Hanlon, RMA Associates



New York City launched an AI chatbot to help small businesses navigate permits, licenses, regulations, and other requirements for opening and operating a business. The goal was to use technology to provide faster and more efficient access to government information. But the chatbot did not perform as expected, as it produced

inaccurate answers and, in some cases, guidance that could have resulted in violations of applicable laws and regulations.

The problem was not simply that technology made mistakes. Government agencies make mistakes all the time. In this case, the AI technology failed, and the larger issue became determining where accountability rested. Public officials are leaders who remain responsible for the decisions, information, and services their organizations provide, even when assisted by technology.

The model was running. Accountability was not.

The accountability challenge extends beyond chatbots into how artificial intelligence is increasingly being used in government financial management, including fraud detection, procurement oversight, grant administration, payment integrity, audit analytics, and predictive risk assessment. AI provides the ability to analyze large volumes of data, identify unusual transactions, and detect patterns that might otherwise go unnoticed. Besides this increased analytical capability, AI creates an important question for government financial managers: Can we explain how an AI-supported conclusion was reached?

Accountability Remains With Management

Government financial managers are held accountable and operate in an environment where decisions must be documented, supported, and subject to oversight. Auditors need sufficient evidence to understand and evaluate why a transaction was identified or flagged as high risk. Inspectors General are concerned with how potential fraud was identified. Program managers should be able to explain why a grantee, contractor, or payment received additional

scrutiny. These respective responsibilities do not disappear when AI becomes part of the process. The Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act and OMB Circular A-123 place responsibility on federal managers for maintaining effective internal control, managing risk, and supporting reliable financial management and reporting. As AI becomes integrated into these activities, agencies must be able to demonstrate how AI-supported conclusions contributed to management decisions. That is where the AI accountability gap emerges: technological capability can advance faster than the governance needed to oversee it.

Explainability Must Be Part of Governance

One mistake organizations and government agencies can make is treating explainability as a technical feature to consider after an AI system has already been selected or deployed. Instead, explainability should be considered during procurement, design, implementation, and continue as part of ongoing oversight.

Leaders should evaluate up front whether the AI models being selected and used produce accurate predictions. Just as important, leaders should be able to understand, document, and defend the logic supporting those prediction results. Explainable artificial intelligence, or XAI, provides techniques that can help analysts understand which factors influence a model's results and allow for counterfactual analysis. Depending on risk assessment, agencies should also consider whether a simpler, inherently interpretable model is more appropriate.

The objective is not to turn financial managers into data scientists. It is to give decision-makers enough understanding to exercise professional judgment rather than simply accepting an algorithm's output.

Four Questions Financial Managers Should Ask

- **Can we explain the result?** If an AI system identifies a transaction, contractor, grantee, or program as high risk, managers should understand the factors that influenced that conclusion.
- **Can we document it?** AI-supported decisions should leave an audit trail sufficient to support management review, external audit, and oversight.

Continued on Next Page ➞

- **Can we identify bias or unreliable data?** Models learn from data. Historical bias, incomplete information, or poor-quality data can become embedded in future predictions.
- **Who is accountable?** Responsibility cannot be transferred to a vendor, technical team, or algorithm. An accountable government official must ultimately own the decision and the process used to reach it.

Closing the Accountability Gap

AI can strengthen government financial management by improving fraud detection, increasing efficiency, and helping agencies identify risks across increasingly large and complex datasets. But accuracy and efficiency alone are not enough. Government organizations should build explainability, documentation, human oversight, and accountability into AI governance from the beginning and maintain them throughout the AI system's use.

The principle is straightforward: AI can inform a government decision, but it cannot assume responsibility for one.

As government financial management becomes increasingly data-driven, public trust will depend not

simply on smarter algorithms, but on leaders who can explain, defend, and take responsibility for the decisions those algorithms help inform.

About the Author

Timothy Hanlon, CPA, CIA, CGFM, CISA, PMP, MBA, is a Senior Manager at RMA Associates, where he conducts federal financial statement audits. He is also a doctoral candidate at Marymount University, where his research focuses on explainable artificial intelligence (XAI) and its application to fraud detection and predictive analytics in federal financial management. **A more in-depth article examining the AI accountability gap has been submitted to California Management Review for publication consideration.**

About RMA Associates

RMA is a CPA firm that goes beyond traditional auditing. Our seasoned professionals deliver innovative solutions that help federal agencies strengthen operations, manage risk, and achieve mission success.

This publication is for informational purposes only and does not constitute professional advice or services, or any endorsement of any kind.



Innovation. It's our go-to state of mind.

Explore >



OFFICERS

President	Kelsey Do
President-Elect	Joseph Hungate
Immediate Past President	Irfan Satriadhi
Secretary	Jasmine Trefzger
Treasurer	Chris Horton
NCC Representative	Irfan Satriadhi

COMMITTEES

ACE Reporting Chair	Brian Grega
Awards & Recognition	Raymond Urias-Rivera
CGFM /Professional Certification	Kevin Shers
Community Services/Social Media	Jaslin Madrigal Castro
Corporate Sponsorship	Chris Horton
Early Careers	Dylan Gilbert, Rhett Raham, Chad Willhite
Education	Kevin Love
Membership	Kyle McClain, Kelley Rockwell
Newsletter	Sonia Kessler, Nishit Kurani
Meetings and Events	Silas York
Meetings and Events/Historian	Donna Canady
Programs	Ingrid Raslan
State and Local Government	Chris Horton
Webmaster	Zak Kennedy

SPONSORSHIPS

Thank you to our corporate sponsors for supporting our Chapter and our members during this program year. Through your continued support, we can continue hold chapter meetings and CGFM® study groups, and other networking and membership events.

We are excited to announce a new initiative this year: a special discount for small businesses – Platinum, Gold, and Silver levels. We believe this will provide greater opportunities for diverse organizations to engage with our Chapter and contribute to our shared goals.

For information on becoming a corporate sponsor for the next program year (2027 – 2028), please contact the Corporate Sponsor Chair Chris Horton at c.horton@rmafed.com.

Platinum Sponsor

RMA | Associates
Auditors. Consultants. Advisors.

Silver Sponsor

**KEARNEY &
COMPANY**

KPMG

Bronze Sponsor



CONTACT US

NOVAGA is an association with more than 900 members from the federal, state, local, public and private practices, with a mission statement to serve professionals in the government financial management community by providing quality education, fostering professional development and certification and supporting standards and research to advance government accountability. We would love to hear from you! Feel free to email one of our board members directly, connect with us on LinkedIn, or check out our home page at agacgfm.org/Chapters/NOVAGA.



AGI★ATM
Northern Virginia
Chapter